(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) The number of seats for the MBBS Course in the proposed College is 100 out of which 23 seats are reserved for SC/ST candidates.

Status of mental health facilities in the country

1376. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) the current status of mental health facilities in the country with regard to doctors, hospitals and drug manufacturing;

(b) whether there is a policy to tackle the growing mental illness of various modes in India and undertake research projects for it;

(c) whether social awareness programmes are conducted by Government and various State Governments;

(d) the size of populace suffering from mental illness; and

(e) whether Government have conducted any census or survey of mental patients in the country?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) and (b) There are over 18,000 beds for psychiatric patients spread across 37 Government mental hospitals in the country. In addition there are about 3500 beds located in general hospitals/affiliated to medical colleges. There are about 40 training centres for post-graduate study in psychiatry. In addition there are 40 to 50 private psychiatric facilities in the country. Availability of psychotropic drugs is satisfactory and the cost of such drugs is reasonable/affordable. Under the National Mental Health Programme, the Government has already initiated a pilot programme named the District Mental Health Programme, which is currently being implemented in 25 districts covering 20 States and Union Territories. Its aim is to identity persons suffering from various mental disorders and epilepsy and manage them at the primary healthcare centre and district level by trained doctors and with the active support of the families and the community in which the patient lives. The mental health care delivery system is proposed to be upgraded/expanded during the Tenth Five Year Plan period. A number of research projects have been undertaken and major research initiatives are planned for the Tenth Five Year Plan period.

(c) Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities are also a component of District Mental Health Programme for creating social awareness.

(d) and (e) Epidemiological studies have revealed that 1 to 2% of the population have major mental disorders and 5 to 10% suffer from minor mental disorders.

Use of bio-weapons by terrorists

1377. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has made any effort to identify the kind of bio-weapons that might be used by terrorists and the diseases caused thereof;

(b) if so, the steps taken to create public awareness and educate the public to guard against such bio and chemical warfare threats; and

(c) whether the stock of antibiotics to face such a situation in the country is sufficient?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C. P. THAKUR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government has taken following actions in the context of the present international scenario:

(i) A detailed list of biological agents used as weapons prepared by the Indian Council of Medical Research along with signs and symptoms, likely method of dissemination, incubation period, lethality and the availability of vaccines, anti-microbial therapy and treatment has been circulated to Health Secretary and Director of Health Services of all States/UTs, and Central Govt. hospitals advising them to take following precautionary steps:

Earmarking of maximum number of beds for emergency contingency

Stocking of vaccines/sera/drugs to the extent possible

Setting up a special team of doctors for coordinated action. They should be sensitized on the impact of such weapons and treatment measures.

(ii) Two expert group meetings were held (1st & 17th October) in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to review the management (diagnosis, treatment, IEC activities etc.) of recently emerging diseases of public